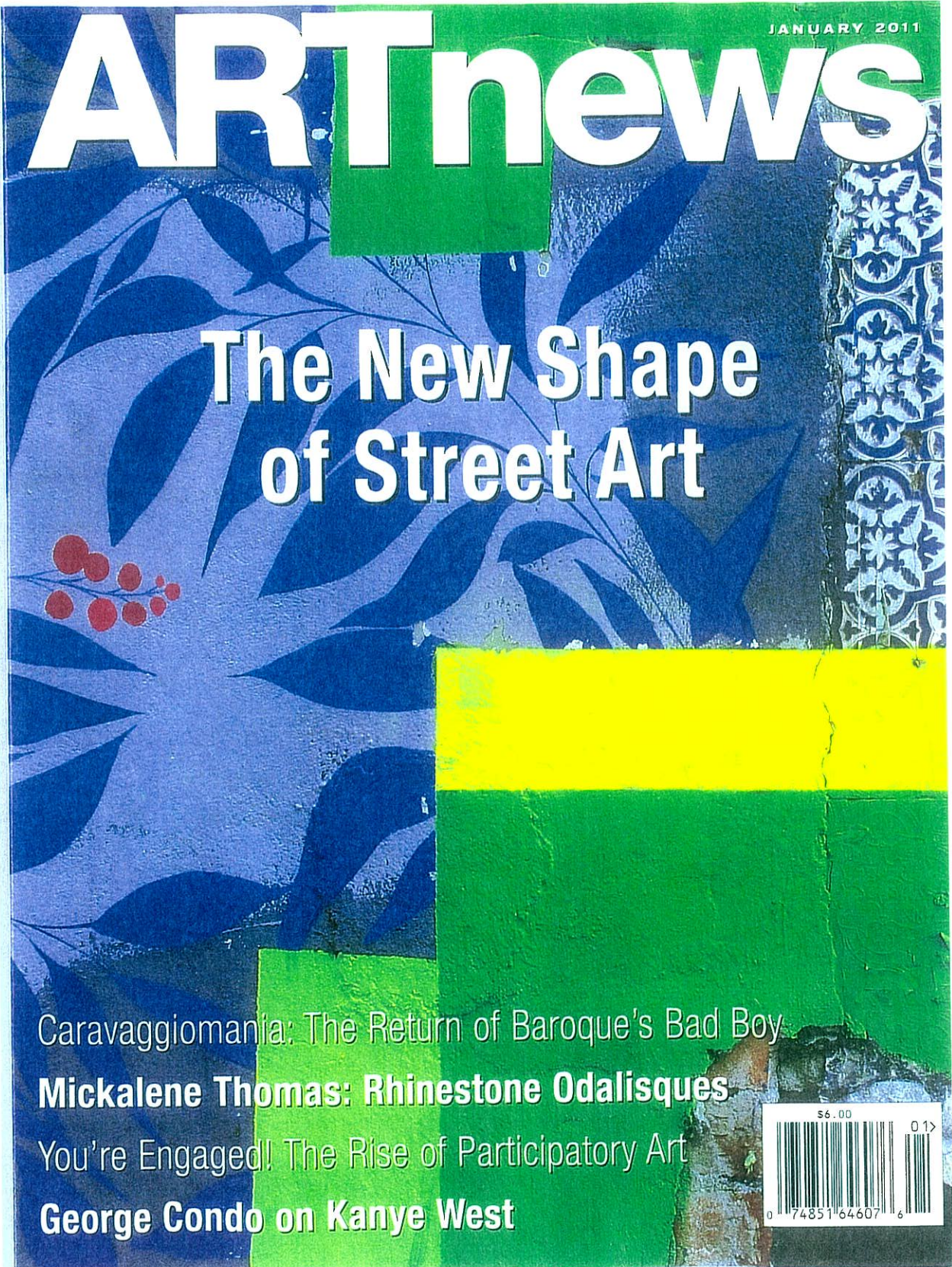


ARTnews
'The Dissolve' SITE Santa Fe
By, Ann Landi
January 2011

Dissolve
Critique



JANUARY 2011

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'The Dissolve'

SITE Santa Fe

Santa Fe

Focusing on a trend in recent video art, the curators of the SITE Santa Fe Eighth International Biennial brought together 30 examples of what they call "a hybrid practice where the handmade meets the high-tech." By this, independent curator Sarah Lewis and Daniel Belasco, from New York's Jewish Museum, mean artists who join traditional practices—painting, drawing, sculpture, costumes, sets—with animation and video to produce generally

reviews: national



Mary Reid Kelley, still from *You Make Me Iliad*, 2010.
HD video with sound, 7 minutes, 22 seconds.
SITE Santa Fe.

narrative works. The upshot is a clever, and often dizzying, lesson in how richly varied video can be.

To give some historical context, there were examples of early stop-motion works from Lotte Reiniger—whose *The Adventures of Prince Achmed* (1926) is believed to be the oldest surviving feature-length animated film—and from Fleischer Studios, which introduced Betty Boop and Popeye.

And familiar names from recent times were also on hand: William Kentridge's *History of the Main Complaint* (1996) features his weary South African businessman, Soho Eckstein, in a video made from Kentridge's smudgy charcoal drawings, while Kara Walker's silhouettes of beastly Southern overseers engage in unspeakable acts with newly freed slaves.

Other artists here—such as Ezra Johnson, Berni Searle, Christine Rebet, and Laleh Khorramian—bring an unabashedly painterly sensibility to the video medium. George Griffin introduces a comic touch in his work, which required the viewer to step up on a platform and peer into a "mutoscope" to watch cartoonish characters loping around photographer Eadweard Muybridge's running man. One of the spookiest works belonged to Mary Reid Kelley, whose *You Make Me Iliad* (2010), set toward the end of World War I, has bizarrely costumed characters—played by Kelley herself—declaiming epic poetry in a Belgian brothel.

The only problem with this rich array was the time needed to see the films in full. Several visits were necessary, but it was well worth the investment.

—Ann Landi